INFO SHEET
Veterinary Services

United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
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Highlights of NAHMS Feedlot '99 Part III

In 1999, the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) conducted a study of feedlots with 1,000-head or more capacity within the 12 leading cattle feeding states.[1] These feedlots represented 84.9 percent of United States feedlots in 1999 with 1,000-head or more capacity and contained 96.1 percent of the U.S. feedlot cattle inventory on January 1, 2000, on feedlots with 1,000-head or more capacity.

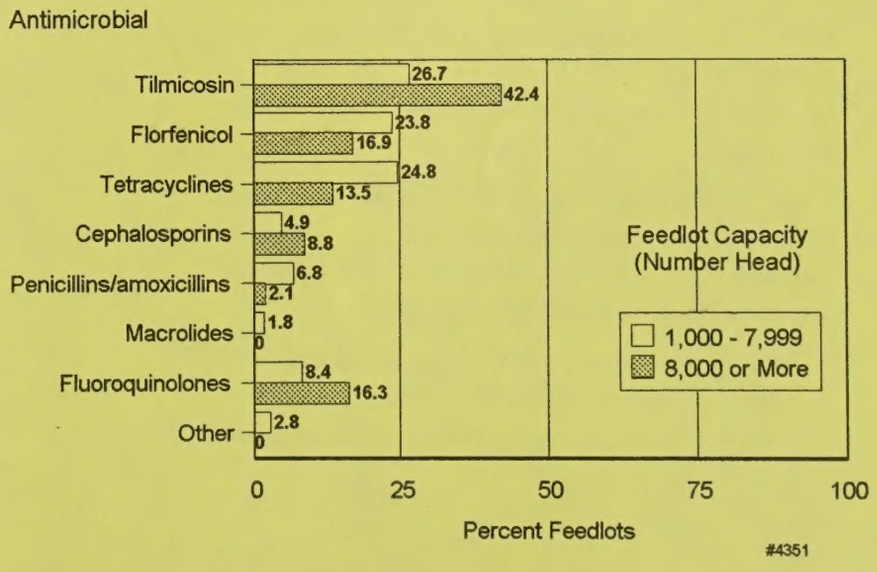
The following information was excerpted from a report released in December 2000, Feedlot '99 *Part III: Baseline Reference of Health Management and Biosecurity in U.S. feedlots, 1999*. Operations were categorized as small (1,000 to 7,999 head capacity) and large (8,000 or more head capacity). Metaphylaxis is the therapeutic treatment of high-risk cattle as a group prior to disease development.

Antimicrobial Use

- Large feedlots were more likely than small feedlots to administer antimicrobials metaphylactically to groups of cattle to prevent bovine respiratory disease (BRD, 80.9 percent compared to 26.5 percent, respectively). Overall, 10.4 percent of cattle placed in feedlots were administered antimicrobials metaphylactically to prevent BRD.
- Tilmicosin, florfenicol, and tetracyclines were the primary antimicrobials used by feedlots for the initial treatment of BRD (Figure 1).
- More than 84 percent of feedlots changed their choice of antimicrobial if the therapeutic regimen used for the initial treatment of respiratory disease failed to result in a favorable response.
- On 79 percent of feedlots, veterinary recommendation had a strong influence on the selection of injectable antimicrobials.
- More than 70 percent of feedlots provided employees with formal training on each of the following: disease diagnosis, appropriate antimicrobial selection for specific disease, label use of antimicrobial, and drug residue avoidance.
- Overall, 83.2 percent of feedlots included an antimicrobial in the feed or water of cattle as a health or production management tool.
- Tylosin was included in the feed or water of 42.3 percent of cattle as a health or production management tool for approximately 140 days. Chlortetracycline was included in the feed or water of 18.2 percent of cattle for approximately 8 days.

Figure 1

Percent of Feedlots by the Primary Antimicrobial Used as Part of the Initial Treatment for Respiratory Disease and by Feedlot Capacity



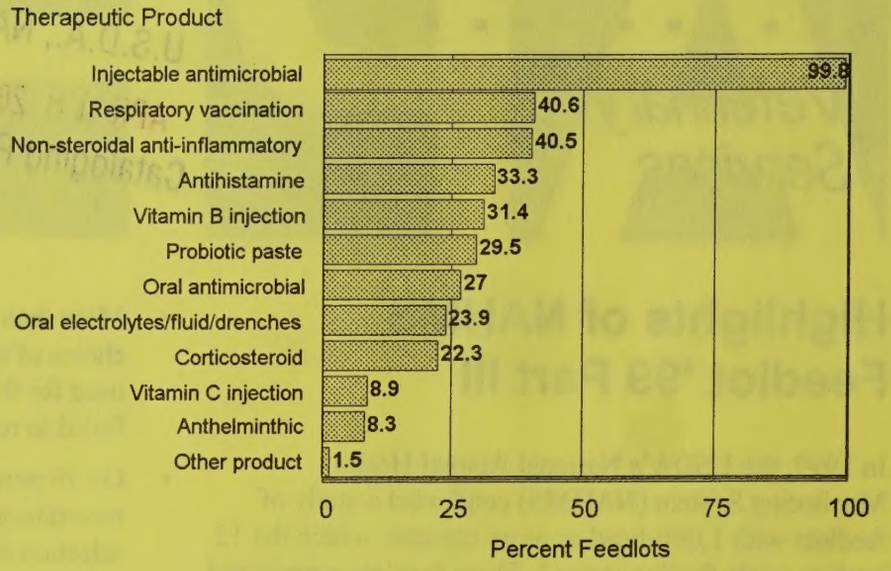
[1] Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington.

Management of Sick Cattle

- BRD was the most common disease condition on feedlots, affecting 14.4 percent of placements overall. A larger percentage of placements were affected with BRD on large feedlots (15.5 percent) than on small feedlots (8.7 percent).
- Acute interstitial pneumonia was the second most common disease condition in feedlot cattle, affecting 3.1 percent of all placements.
- Nearly all feedlots (99.8 percent) included an injectable antimicrobial as part of an initial course of treatment for BRD (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Percent of Feedlots by Products Given to Cattle as Part of an Initial Course of Treatment for Respiratory Disease



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- Approximately one-third (31.3 percent) of feedlots included an injectable antimicrobial as part of an initial course of treatment for digestive problems.
- The cost of medicine to treat one sick animal for bovine respiratory disease was greater on large feedlots ($16.26) than on small feedlots ($11.09).
- Nearly all (99.2 percent) feedlots used at least one parasiticide during the year ending June 30, 1999. Approximately two-thirds (65.1 percent) of cattle were administered an avermectin.

Other Information

- Most (96.9 percent) feedlots used manure removal as a means of fly control. Additionally, 87.8 percent of feedlots used a fly control method other than manure removal.
- Less than one-half of feedlots (41.3 percent) considered the World Wide Web an important resource for obtaining cattle health and production information.
- Large feedlots were more likely than small feedlots to store production and/or animal health-related information in a computer data base (95.8 percent compared to 63.5 percent, respectively).
- Nearly 39 percent of large feedlots restricted the movement of horses on the premises for biosecurity reasons. Approximately 26 percent of large feedlots restricted the movement of people as a biosecurity precaution.
- On average, the number of days between routine cleaning of water troughs was less for large feedlots compared to small feedlots. Across seasons, the average number of days between cleanings was 7.5 to 9.6 days for large feedlots and 15.0 to 18.3 days for small feedlots.
- A greater percentage of large feedlots (86.9 percent) than small feedlots (76.8 percent) were somewhat or very familiar of the Food and Drug Administration's policy that prohibits the use of any product containing mammalian protein (excluding blood) from being fed to cattle.

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